

Conference Paper

The Performance of Cultural Policy: Strategic Orientations and Sociological Indicators

Zubanova L.B.¹ and Sinetskii S.B.²

¹Doctor of Cultural Studies, Professor of the Chelyabinsk Institute of Culture, Chelyabinsk, Russia

²Vice Rector of the Chelyabinsk Institute of Culture, Chelyabinsk, Russia

Abstract

In this article, the authors address the problems of assessing the effectiveness of cultural policy. Strategic and tactical guidelines and indicators of efficiency of its development in modern Russia are conceptualized. The results of all-Russian surveys of students conducted by the authors in three cities of Russia (Moscow, Yekaterinburg, and Chelyabinsk) are summarized.

Keywords: culture, cultural policy, effectiveness of cultural policy, surveys, students.

Corresponding Author:

Zubanova L.B.

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1. Introduction

Achieving effectiveness of cultural policy is a problem, on the one hand, provoking a continued interest of researchers [1; 4], on the other – causing a number of challenges owing to the complex and ambiguous nature of an objective evaluation system to be established [5]. In general, the success of cultural policy can be determined both at the level of strategic priorities and expressed in measurable indicators (tactical level of compliance). In our opinion, strategic priorities are related to the continued replicability of the required cultural norms and values within the boundaries of the region designated by a cultural policymaker [7, c.267].

The tactical level of compliance of the state cultural policy, as a rule, is captured in dynamics of the numerical indicators reflecting various aspects of operation of cultural institutions (achievement of the target indicators designated in the accounting records and guidance documents of the ministries and agencies).

2. Methods and Approbation of the Study

Among the main methods used in the research, it is necessary to highlight the methods of analysis and synthesis, the method of generalization and the empirical method. The

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latter enables evaluation of the performance of cultural policy in the context of its strategic guidelines and sociological indicators.

The quantitative and qualitative indicators based on the results of the representative surveys of target groups can be considered a kind of “connecting bridge”. The surveys reflect the effectiveness of “culture in action” [2; 3]. The need for “feedback” with the audience was stated in the decree of the President of the Russian Federation on the Approval of the Basics of the State Cultural Policy [6].

In 2018-2019, the authors conducted all-Russian surveys of students in three cities of Russia: Moscow, Yekaterinburg, and Chelyabinsk. The selected cities represented three types of socio-cultural locations: the center of cultural life (Moscow), the cultural and creative business springboard (Yekaterinburg) and the industrial and peripheral cultural locus (Chelyabinsk). A total of 1750 students of leading universities were interviewed in the three cities.

The content of the state cultural policy of Russia is seen by young people to a greater extent as a representation of the past (previous achievements and victories in different historical periods) than “portrayal” of the future. Thus, the retro strategy of the state cultural policy was mentioned by 40% of Moscow students and 41% of the students in Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk, while the focus on the future was attributed to the outsider positions in each of the studied cities: 17% (Moscow), 16% (Yekaterinburg), and 12% (Chelyabinsk). In our opinion, the principal indicator of the effectiveness of cultural policy is the “connectivity” of the past and the future in the cognitive practices of the modern generation, which is the possibility of using the past in planning the prospects of their own lives. At the same time, the expectations of young people are largely associated with creating visions for the future, which the modern cultural policy of the country is obviously lacking.

The surveyed students described the attention of the state to the cultural sphere at the present stage as “peripheral”. Thus, the lowest percentage of the answers was recorded when choosing the position “culture can be considered as a priority sphere of state interests” (in Moscow – 10% of the answers, in Yekaterinburg – 7.6%, and in Chelyabinsk – 6.8%). In contrast, the answer “culture is on the periphery of state interests” turned out to be the leading one in each of the cities (Moscow – 39% of the answers, Yekaterinburg – 38.9%, and Chelyabinsk – 40.8%). At the same time, the students’ opinions about the necessary direction of the state cultural policy is associated, rather, not with the ideological (designation of meaningful priorities, values and ideals of the spiritual social development), but with the technical administration of the cultural and art institutions, growth of the cultural level of the population and creation of the conditions (primarily

material) for the development and creative expression of professional artists (without interference in the content of their work).

As we have already stressed, the strategic objectives of cultural policy do not exclude the appeal to the specific and practical aspects of assessing the quality of the cultural, artistic and leisure environment of the territories. Based on the results of the research, we can generally speak about a certain stabilization of the students' involvement in the cultural and artistic life of the city. When consolidating the indicators (summing up the percentage of responses in the columns: "much more often", "a little more often" and opposite positions – "much less", "do not visit at all"), the situation was as follows:

- *cinemas*: a slight increase in visits in Moscow and a significant increase in Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk (more than 10% compared to the negative answers);
- *theatres*: an increase in visits in each of the three cities;
- *art galleries*: increased visits in Moscow and a significant reduction in Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk (more than 10% compared to positive responses);
- *local lore museums*: a reduction of visits in each of the three cities;
- *libraries*: a significant reduction of visits in each of the three cities;
- *concert halls (philharmonic halls)*: a relative balance between positive and negative choices (in the direction of a slight strengthening of the positions of increasing contacts).

Thus, the leading positions of the frequency of visits are associated with the activities of cinemas (which is understandable due to the mass, entertainment and sustainable popularity of this practice among the youth audience), theaters (synthetic art that combines dramatic, musical, artistic and plastic elements of the impact on the public) and concert halls (a variety of compiled formats of art proposals). Nevertheless, in relation to cultural institutions, focused mainly on the preservation and transmission of cultural and artistic heritage (libraries and local lore museums), there is a clear decline in the students' interests.

It is interesting to mention the distribution of the attention shown by the young people in relation to programs about art and culture on TV and the Internet. There is clearly not so much the priority of content as the format of a message (undoubtedly affecting the content in its own way and significantly transforming it in some cases). Thus, when choosing television, the leading answers in all the cities were: "attention remains at the same level", "I do not watch (and did not watch before) programs about culture and art"; when choosing the Internet: "I began to devote much more time to viewing Internet stuff about culture and art", "I began to devote a little more time to viewing Internet stuff about culture and art."

3. Conclusions

Proceeding from the above, there is a possible latent conflict in the communication system of institutions responsible for the development and implementation of cultural policy among the students. The conflict is probably objectified by different communicative competences of the subject of cultural policy and the object of its influence. Consequently, it is possible to predict a gradual decrease in the assimilating potential of traditional culture (while maintaining the archaic forms of its administration) and the growth of conglomeration and innovation of real cultural practices.

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